DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 069 341 PS 005 916

TITLE	Classroom on Wheels.
INSTITUTION	Murfreesboro City Schools, Tenn.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	27p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Classroom Design; *Disadvantaged Youth; *Educational Mobility; Itinerant Teachers; *Mobile Classrooms; Mobile Educational Services; *Parent Participation; Preschool Programs; Program Evaluation; School Design; Specifications; Transportation
IDENTIFIERS	Murfreesboro City Schools; Tennessee

ABSTRACT

Designed for 3- and 4-year-old disadvantaged children and their parents, a mobile unit consisting of a renovated school bus turned classroom is described which travels to three areas daily for a 2-hour period. The program for children is designed primarily for developmental skills--visual, sensory, auditory, and cognitive. Activities emphasize language and concept development, the development of a positive self-image, and enrichment experiences. A program for parents operating concurrently includes home visits and contacts, group meetings, newsletters and homework, book, picture, and toy lending libraries, and a "teaching tiny tots" lesson plan. Results are reported which exceed expectations in language and measured IQ gains as well as in personal and social development. Parents gained in knowledge of child growth and development. Appendices provide information on approximate costs for operation of a mobile classroom and on floor plans. (LH)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 069341

CLASSROOM ON WHEELS

PS 005916

Murfreesboro City Schools · Murfreesboro, Tennessee · 1972

The project reported herein was performed pursuant to a Grant from the U. S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U. S. Office of Education should be inferred.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Overview of the Program 3

Mobile Classroom 5
Program for Children 7

- Language and Concept Development 7
- Perceptual and Motor Skill Development 8
- Enrichment Experiences 9
- A Positive Self-image 9

Program for Parents 11

- Home Visits and Contacts 11
- Group Meetings 12
- Newsletters and Homework 13
- Book Lending Library 14
- Picture Lending Library 15
- Toy Lending Library 16
- Teaching Tiny Tots 16

Our Results 17

- Other Assessments 17

Acknowledgements 18
Appendix 19

- Approximate Costs for Operation 20
- Floor Plans 22

CREDITS

Gerald Powell, layout
Mike Borum, photographer

INTRODUCTION

For many years I have had a wishful feeling about deprived children, a feeling—deeply engrained, poignant, nagging—that makes me toss at night. I have wanted to make life easier and performance greater for that segment of our population entering school one to two full years behind more privileged children. My feeling became a dream and the dream a compulsion.

I shall never forget the day of real awakening for me. Several years ago, I observed a master teacher at work with a group of eleven disadvantaged six-year-olds during a reading class. With all of her competencies, she was struggling unsuccessfully to make a story "Surprise for Sally" meaningful. But not one of the eleven children knew the meaning of the word "surprise."

I suppose I had known for a long time that deprivation had adverse effects upon the education of children, but I had never been quite able to pinpoint one of the major problems so vividly. It dawned on me. Here was an excellent teacher putting everything she had into her teaching, and she had all the teaching aides one could possibly need, but these six-year-olds had few experiences to associate with the printed page. Identification with the character who had a red wagon and a real father who brought home a surprise was out of the question. In addition there was no one at home who really knew how to care whether the experience brought pleasure or pain.

Through experiences such as this over more than a quarter of a century of teaching and supervision, I reached the firm conviction that children's shoes may be different, but their feet are the same. Deprivation can make a vast difference which can become a lifetime handicap.

Mine is not a unique concern. All good teachers have it and strive to make up the preexisting deficiencies. All good principals and superintendents have it. My superintendent was concerned, and his concern was the impetus I needed to plan a program which, if successful, would make a profound difference in the lives of disadvantaged children.

The plan later involved a Classroom on Wheels, parents whose covert interest in their children has too often been disputed, a cadre of teachers and community well-wishers who caught the spirit, a cooperating state and federal agency, and a local school board with empathy for the disadvantaged. The plan became the Murfreesboro Preschool Development Project funded under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

While the evaluation indicates positive results for the program activities, the staff would acknowledge that the program is not the ultimate answer for preschool education not an optimum program for the disadvantaged. But having worked with the program for three years, we have come to the following conclusions.

For disadvantaged preschool children an optimum program would be a full day of well-planned day care services with an appropriate educational program to meet specific needs. At this point, these services are not available, and would be expensive; therefore, we feel that we can recommend this project as an interim program which is practical and productive. We can further suggest it as a high priority program for meeting the needs of preschool children.

By the age of three or four, disadvantaged children are behind other children. In order to catch up, they have to progress faster than the normal rate. The activities in which our pupils engage must be highly selective and geared toward those skills that can be used effectively in day to day actions in the home and community and those which are felt to provide preschool children with tools they need for successful school work.

It is necessary that a parent education program operate concurrently with the program for children. The parent program should be a strong component, for parents need motivation and a good feeling of accomplishment themselves. An important facet of the parent education program is the provision of appropriate materials to help them reinforce skills taught by the teacher and to develop language and concepts for cognitive learning.

RUTH BOWDOIN

Overview of the Program

Because of our commitment to the importance of early training at this crucial and formative age, this program was designed for three- and four - year - old disadvantaged children and their parents. Locally known as the "Classroom on Wheels," this mobile unit consisting of a renovated school bus turned classroom, travels to three areas daily for a two-hour period. Ten to fifteen children from the neighborhoods having a high concentration of low income families attend the classroom. The program for children is designed primarily for developmental skills — visual, sensory, auditory, and cognitive. Activities emphasize language and concept development and the development of a positive self-image. Enrichment experiences designed to increase the dimensions of the learning environment are provided.

An educational program for parents operates concurrently with the program for children. Goals are to make parents aware of the importance of the early years in forming the basis for subsequent learning, to increase aspirations for their children, to increase knowledge of child development, and to provide materials and techniques in order to help them engage in purposeful learning activities with their child at home, and thus reinforce skills taught by teachers in the classroom.

Each time the child attends the Classroom on Wheels, he takes into the home a booksatchel filled with (1) a book for someone to read from the Book Lending Library, (2) a picture with appropriate lesson plan enclosed in plastic from the Picture Lending Library, (3) a toy for mother and child to use in play-learning activities from the Toy Lending Library, and (4) a "Teaching Tiny Tots" lesson plan designed for mother to use in a learning activity with her child.

In addition to the above activities, the following are components of the parent program: (1) home visits made by one of the teachers while the unit is in the community, (2) parent meetings conducted twice monthly, (3) newsletters mailed weekly into each home (third grade readability level), (4) homework for children mailed with the newsletters—(designed for developing language), and (5) a volunteer reading club for older siblings of the project pupils.

Results have exceeded expectations in language and measured IQ gains as well as in personal and social development. Parents have gained in knowledge of child growth and development. The pre-post gain scores, after being tested for significance of difference, yield results statistically significant at $p.<001$ level.

The Mobile Classroom

On an end-of-summer day in 1969, the superintendent, B. E. Hobgood, surveyed the maintenance parking lot with an eye for a school bus to turn into a classroom. We had in mind a traveling classroom—a school on wheels. He spotted a yellow with a white top. The maintenance supervisor accompanying him placed his hand upon the hood, gave it a healthy pat, and said, "She's old, but she still purrs like a kitten, and on cold days she turns over without a sputter!" Tommy Lytle, the skilled worker on the maintenance crew, began the job of changing the character of the interior.[1] Seats were removed. The dull gray interior soon became light yellow and paneling was added to give it a warm tone. Cabinets were built for storage, bookcases for books, toy chests for dolls and trucks. A housekeeping center was built into the plan.

The bus was wired for lights, heating, and an air conditioner. An electrical connection was installed in order to plug into outlets provided strategically in the city's low income areas.

An assortment of simple jobs was completed. A folding hanger was added for coats in cold weather. A small portable refrigerator provided a place to keep refreshments for snack time. A screen for filmstrips was placed behind the driver's seat. A green indoor-outdoor carpet and curtains with an animal design completed the decor. For instructional purposes a round table and seats for children were provided.

Almost overnight the 1951 model school bus had become a 1969 model school. When all was completed, the ingenious engineer viewed his work obviously as a labor of love.

The exterior was yellow, and yellow it remained for safety reasons. However, something distinguishing was needed. And there is no law against capturing the imagination of children by painting a Humpty Dumpty or Mother Goose on the side. So these painted characters greet the little ones as they approach their Humpty Dumpty school. Upon arriving, many children either curtsy before, or plant a kiss on, their favorite character.

The yellow school bus became the Classroom on Wheels with painted characters on the exterior and live, wiggling, curly tops, pig tails, and crew cuts on the interior. The townspeople, first curious and now knowledgeable, treat the Humpty Dumpty school with a measure of respect usually reserved for an aged grandmother.

[1]See Appendix for floor plans.

The Program for Children

The mobile units (now there are two) driven by the teacher or the paraprofessional travel to three centers daily. Twice or three times weekly they go for a two-hour period to serve ten to fifteen youngsters at each center in low income neighborhoods.

Trudging to the classroom, the three-and four-year-olds clutch the hands of grandmother, grandfather, big sister, or mamma. At first this security is needed, but the need begins to fade as the youngsters adjust to the new experience.

The major emphasis of the program is language and concept development. In the aspects of language that have been measured quantitatively, the disadvantaged child has been found to function at a lower level than is needed for school success. In fact, language seems to be the major handicap from which many other handicaps seem to emerge.

Our experience indicates that a child exposed to language experiences in the home has a good chance of becoming a good reader. According to recent studies, many children from privileged homes speak 3,000 to 6,000 words and are able to comprehend 20,000 to 48,000 words before they enter the first grade. The child who has only a few dozen or even a few hundred words in his speaking vocabulary enters school with a deficiency too large to vercome.

LANGUAGE AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The curriculum for the mobile classroom includes many things which children from more affluent homes learn incidentally. Animals and what they say and do; clothing names and purposes; people and how they live and work; types of transportations and their function; identification of colors, the parts of the body, action words, simple counting and understanding numerals. The more difficult concepts relating to language understandings (such as first—last, above—below, over—under—between, left—right, to—from, in—out, fast—slow, and—or) are emphasized.

Various activities are designed specifically for achieving desired outcomes. Free play is engaged in for thirty minutes of the two-hour period. At this time children participate in activities of their choice. Many of the children have not had trucks, blocks, puzzles, or educational toys. Play experiences are

new and meaningful. The teacher and the paraprofessional interact with children as they help develop appropriate language and understanding necessary for subsequent learnings. Children listen as they begin to make deductions, repeat words, then phrases, and, hopefully, full sentences.

Planned and/or structured language activities occupy a full hour of the two-hour schedule. Activities of a wide variety (in units) designed to develop selected concepts are planned by the teacher. Filmstrips and pictures are shown. Puppets talk. Stories, nursery rhymes, and poetry are read and enjoyed. Songs, action games, and mimetics add variety and develop concepts. The tape recorder records single voices and group activities. The recorders fascinate the youngsters and, at the same time, motivate them and increase competency in language and speech.

Activities designed for commercial language development kits are used along with teacher-designed activites of a similar nature. Pictures are studied, and games designed for specific purposes provide fun and learning.

PERCEPTUAL AND MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

While many perceptual and motor skills are concomitant to language, activities are specifically designed for visual perception and motor development. "See mine...I fill mine up" may be heard when a child has completed a task with the pegboard.

"Here a square I made wi' red pegs" says a child who has followed directions with a specific design to copy, pattern to develop, or color to select.

Another day children may string large beads according to color or shape or design. As developmental tasks are achieved children are given large wooden puzzles of graduated difficulty. Learning to distinguish things that are alike and different, things that belong or do not belong in a category, is made possible by the use of tangible materials. Clay modeling, painting, coloring, cutting, pasting provide some opportunity for creative expression as well as for motor development.

ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCES

Children are given many opportunities for experiences which enrich their lives and broaden the dimensions of their early learning. "Happy birthday to you" resounds from the classroom as each child's birthday is celebrated with a party, and many for the first time have a birthday cake with candles and a gift. And word meanings are learned—birthday, age, surprise, gift, wrappings, ribbon, month, day, candles, blow, decorate.

Eating in a restaurant, ordering from a drug store, mailing valentines at the post office, watching the big red fire engine—all have been experiences which have helped develop concepts necessary for identification with, and understanding of, verbal and written materials. Holding the bottle for a little wooly lamb on John Blankenship's farm provides still more experiences.

At Christmas faces light up with smiles when Santa visits the children during a party in a home. "They'll never forget, and we'll never be the same again," say those adults who share the experience with them.

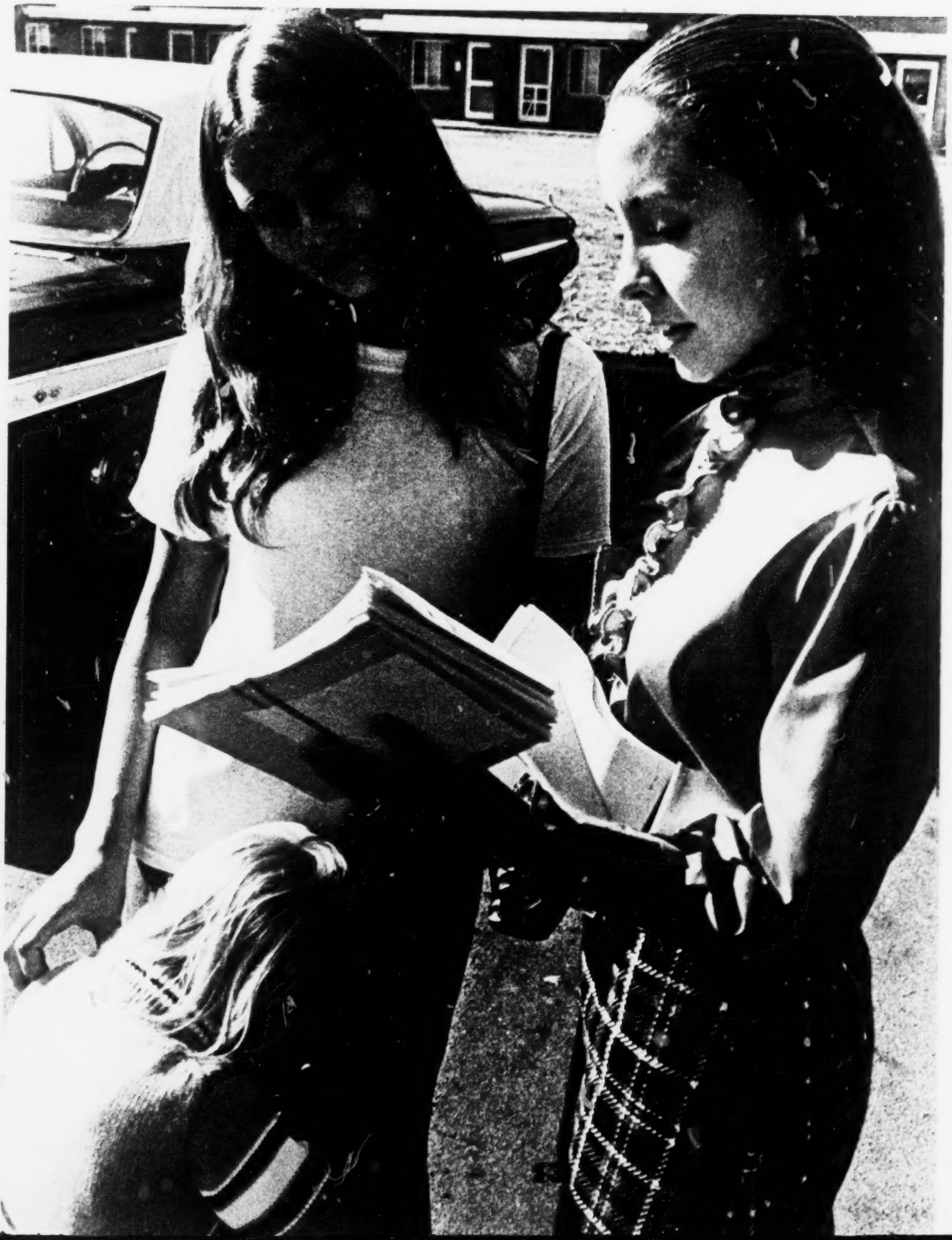
Enrichment activities are financed by interested civic and community groups, professional groups, or individuals who believe in, and receive satisfaction from, having a part in the program.

A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE

Efforts are directed toward developing a positive self-concept because of its importance in learning. Realistic goals are set for each child as he is given constructive tasks within his developmental level, encouraged to complete the task, and allowed to experience success.

A warm atmosphere prevails in the classroom as teachers share love and concern. Some of the children need lap therapy, and they get it. They feel that there is someone near who cares, and that matters very much to the children.

We believe success breeds success. We want each child to feel that he counts for something, that he is important, that he can achieve. If he can enter school with this feeling, if he can have self-esteem and pride in his accomplishments, if he can feel important, worthy, happy—this will be the intrinsic reward which will affect his life and his learning.



Program for Parents

I never knowed I was 'sposed to learn my child. I thought the teachers done that," one mother expresses the feelings of the majority of mothers. When this revelation takes place, our work has begun.

Merely providing disadvantaged preschool children with access to a few hours of instruction each week in the Classroom on Wheels is, of course, not sufficient. Children are not able to profit maximally from school experiences when they spend their early childhood in an environment where teaching does not take place, language is not used, and speaking is not fun.

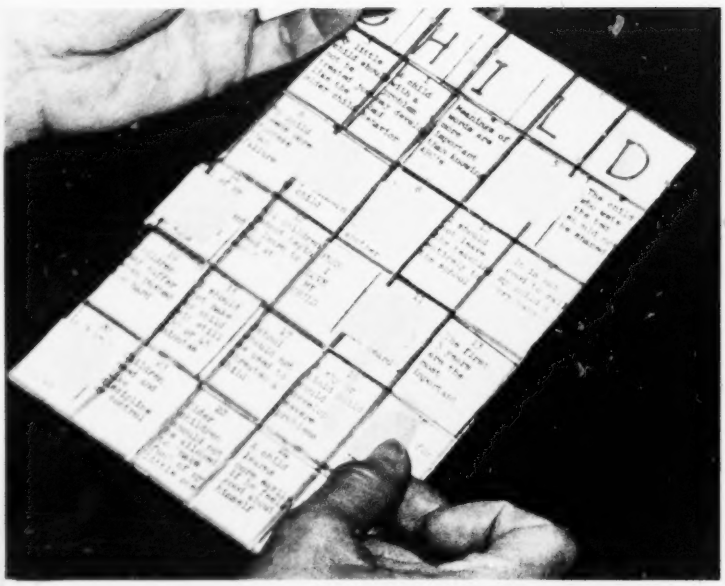
We recognize that the parents' role with their child is mightier than the role of the teacher. When one considers the 1,460 days—the thousands of waking hours a child spends at home before he enters Headstart or kindergarten, it becomes evident that there is time for a great deal of learning. Much can be done by parents, or grandparents, brothers, or sisters.

But the family needs direction in what to do and how to do it. Materials are needed and instruction in their proper use mandatory. Parents also need help in becoming positive models, in developing feelings and attitudes conducive to a good learning environment for children. Parents must accept and practice the concept, "I am a teacher, and the most important teacher my child will ever have." Some parents are indifferent and apathetic, but few are hostile. Most of them do care. But they need to know how to care.

The staff concentrates on a variety of activities which focus directly on the problems and needs of parents and children. Under good direction a parent is able to reinforce the skills being taught by the teacher. He becomes cognizant of meaningful learning experiences and activities which will help develop those abilities which will help develop those abilities relevant to school success. The program for parents is designed to support the parent as he becomes the teacher at home.

HOME VISITS AND CONTACTS

One teacher, or the paraprofessional working under her direction, visits in the homes while the other carries on the instructional program in the



classroom. Visits are made at times other than the most crucial ones when all hands are needed, especially at playtime and refreshment time. Some parents are not at home in the daytime. In these instances the person keeping the child receives the instruction in lieu of the mother.

The staff provides the parent with a large brown envelope to keep materials in a systematic order. This teaching kit bulges with materials: teacher-made booklets and stories (made for three to five cents), crayons and paper, blunt scissors and magazines, inexpensive books, cards for teaching colors and shapes. These materials distributed by the teachers are accompanied by explanations and demonstrations which add to their effectiveness. When she visits, the teacher brings additional teaching materials.

"Today I brought a potato. I want to show you some of the things your child can learn while you are peeling it for your family's supper!" The teacher sometimes uses simple objects found in any home to help parents realize that there are unlimited teaching opportunities. Learning experiences may be found in a bunch of leaves gathered in the yard, some rocks from a rock pile, clothes in a basket, a clock or a dish.

Two things are necessary for home visiting: the teacher must be accepted by the parent, and the parent's home must be accepted by the teacher. In some homes—the staff cannot be deterred by deprivation, the raw ugliness of dingy empty walls, apathy which drains the minds of adults, and the look of fear on dirty faces. Once the parent and teacher accept each other, and both realize that they want only what is best for the child, they can become a team.

There are many opportunities for contacts without a home visit. When a parent or family member accompanies the little one to the Classroom on Wheels or when they come for him at the end of the period, there is time for communication in short doses. It may be commendation for reading to the child, praise for the parent's cooperation with a learning activity, an invitation to a meeting, or a word about the child's performance. These brief contacts serve a useful purpose for motivation as well as for information.

One teacher said, "I wish we had more time with parents. They need us so much, if we only had time to listen more. They have so many problems they need to talk out and so many things they need to learn."

GROUP MEETINGS

"Child-O," shouts a parent from the back table. The teacher nods, and the parent checks his card as he reads, "Number 4, number 8, number 25, number 15." The Child-O game, patterned from the well-known bingo, contains child growth and development practices, and these particular items read: "The

child who wets the bed should not be shamed"; "A child learns more easily if he feels good about himself"; "It is not good to call my child a cry baby," and "I should be concerned if my child bites his nails." The teacher in charge hands the parent a prize—a child's book. The game continues as parents empty their board and start again.

Parent meetings are held regularly every second and fourth Wednesday night. The meetings include buzz sessions, question periods, discussion groups. Games and fun activities, role playing and skits, demonstrations of correct and incorrect ways of working with children—are also used in the parent education meetings.

Seeking to help parents understand and learn, teachers give demonstrations of activities helpful to children. Teachers tell parents what they are doing in the classroom so that parents may reinforce the learning. Songs are sung. Big fingers move to the rhythm of finger plays that little fingers have experienced. Nursery rhymes are taught and practiced.

Putting themselves actively into a situation, parents receive the impetus for developing understanding and changing negative attitudes. At first some parents are shy and insecure. As parents are accepted and made to feel comfortable in their relationships with the staff, their confidence grows.

A follow-up home visit is made to the parents not attending the meeting. But it isn't unusual for a mother to send a high school daughter in her place if she is unable to attend. Sometimes parents bring neighbors or a friend, and a few attend after their child is out of the program.

NEWSLETTERS AND HOMEWORK

Sometimes eager youngsters meet the postman. Once each week they receive a letter from their teachers. A newsletter is mailed to the parent, and homework is included for children. This provides one other avenue for us. Since it is impossible to get into each home each week, the newsletter helps serve our purpose.

The newsletter contains three types of information. The first is general and includes announcements, reports of activities of the group meetings, lists of children whose birthdays occur and who will be having a party. Another part of the newsletter is devoted to suggestions for activities which parents can use with their children. The

newsletter may include aspects of the curriculum to be reinforced at home. In addition, two principles of child growth and development are discussed in each issue.

Efforts are made to make the newsletter readable and to motivate parents to take pride in reading it. Technical language is avoided. An interesting caption often creates curiosity and encourages parents to read.

Two sheets of homework for the child accompany the newsletter. The homework is to be used for language development. The mimeographed sheet contains a large picture of an animal or child or activity, with specific instructions for mother's use, questions to ask, and concepts to develop. The child colors the picture. Mothers are instructed not to push their little one to stay within the lines. To encourage creativity, instructions are given for the child to use his crayons (provided by the program) to add something pertinent to the picture.

Mother places these lessons in the booksatchel and returns them for the teacher to see. The teacher keeps them until the unit is complete at which time she staples them together to form a booklet. Later she returns this booklet to the home. Mother then has her child's completed work. How rewarding this is to those who care. Some parents do not return the work, which provides a system of identification of those who need us most.

BOOK LENDING LIBRARY (Reading Club)

When the children leave the classroom on wheels, they carry one or two inexpensive but well-bound books tucked in their booksatchel. Along with the books is a pink or green slip asking someone to read the book and to sign the slip signifying it was read. This slip is to be returned with the book.

The book lending program is related to the 100 Books Club, through which a parent agrees to read one hundred books to his child during the year. The 100 Books Club has become a vital part of our program with parents. Every family participates. If the parent cannot read, there is usually someone in the family who can. On occasions an illiterate parent has had instruction from an ingenious teacher on "how to read to your child even though you can't read." The teacher shows the parent how to pretend by looking and talking about the pictures as she makes up the lines.

Our efforts are to help parents realize how important words and books can be and what a new and exciting world can open for children who have books read to them. The staff gives the parent a

teacher-made mimeographed booklet entitled "10 Reasons Why Read to Your Young Child." We contend that if parents understand why reading is important, they will be more willing and eager to follow through. They have something to work toward when they set a goal to read 100 or more books which will help their child to have early success in school.

Special emphasis is given to the pleasure in reading. Teachers demonstrate to parents and to siblings how to read a book to young children in a way that will make it exciting and fun. Role playing how-to and how-not-to read a book has been used in parent meetings.

Reading Clubs promoted for the purpose of reading to young children are organized in the elementary schools. Children with little brothers or sisters in the Classroom on Wheels or in Headstart are included in the clubs. Many of these older children are remedial readers themselves. But they are no longer embarrassed to carry home easy books that classmates may have been tempted to call baby books. Reading teachers, the Title I director, classroom teachers, librarians, and principals cooperate with this phase of our program. In special ceremonies at the schools, principals present awards to these students for their work.

Parents, too, are recognized for their reading and other activities engaged in during the year. At the end of the year the superintendent of schools presents Certificates of Merit to the parents for their cooperation and work.

PICTURE LENDING LIBRARY

Low income families often do not have access to magazines or pictures. To help fill this void, pictures are sent home. Encased in plastic with printed lesson plans attached to the back cover, the pictures are large and appropriate for preschoolers. After they are used, the pictures are returned in the child's

booksatchel.

Lesson plans attached to the back of the picture are similar to the following:

Mother: *Your child's brain is developing. He needs your help. Will you take a few minutes (or ask some member of the family to help) and study the picture with your child?*

Ask: *Tell me about the picture. What do you see? (Compliment. Your child needs praise. Encourage him to talk.) How many are playing? Count with me. One, two, three. How many boys do you see? How many are girls? Who is the biggest (largest)? the smallest (least)? Show me the person with the red dress, the blue shirt? Do you think*

they are happy? Why? Is it summer or winter? How do you know? Mother say something like: "Isn't this a nice picture? I like it!" (This develops in your child a love for pictures. He catches your attitude.)

Thank you for helping,

Your Teachers
Classroom on Wheels

TOY LENDING LIBRARY

The staff of the Classroom on Wheels has established a limited toy library to be used in the instructional program. Many parents do not value play experiences and deprive their children of it. The staff attempts to change this concept. In addition we do, when we can, sugar-coat learning. We feel, it is important that children have a positive attitude toward learning.

Toys are selected for their durability, attractiveness to the child, educational potential, and size. It is necessary that the toys be carried home and returned in the booksatchel along with the book and picture. Our toys fall into the categories of educational toys of various types, toy animals, dolls, doll house furniture, trucks and cars, construction blocks, puzzles, puppets, toy radios, music boxes, color cones, and telephones.

"Teaching Through Play" is a guidebook for parents. The contents of the books are alphabetized according to the name of the toy and replete with specific directions. "We put the words in their mouth," says a teacher, "and encourage them to develop concepts useful for expanding the child's potential."

"TEACHING TINY TOTS" LESSON PLANS FOR MOTHER

In order to give direction to the learning at home, the staff provides lesson plans to be used by the parent. One of these lesson plans is placed in the child's booksatchel each time he attends the Classroom on Wheels. The parents are encouraged to keep the lessons in the teaching kit for later reference.

Children need to learn common everyday concepts, and fortunately, the lesson properties are available in even the most deprived homes. A lesson may focus on the teapot or kettle, a chair, an apple. The purpose is to learn "long and short," "big and little," "above and below," and other dimensions, to acquire the symbolic meanings indicated by the colors on the traffic light, to observe, and to verbalize the function and use of these properties or processes.

Other lessons have to do with the classification and identification of simple objects around the house. The world of nature is a source for simple lessons about everyday animal life—the turtle, the squirrel, the calf. Dozens of concepts may be developed during the process of studying a clock, noting different kinds of shoes, sorting socks by color or size, setting a table, helping make cookies, or watching as mother works and talks.

The program for parents is designed to provide continuous encouragement to parents as they support their children's learning experiences.

Our Results

Approximately 350 children participated in this program, each of them receiving instruction for one regular school year. The period between pretests in October and post-tests in April, however, was approximately 6.5 months. During each of the three years that the project was funded by Title III, each group of children in the program made significant gains in language ability and IQ during this test period.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to measure changes in language ability. For the 295 children who took both a pre- and a post-test during the three-year project, the mean gain in language was 18.3 months.

The Goodenough Draw-A-Woman Test was used to measure changes in IQ. For the 293 children who took both a pre- and a post-test during the three years, a mean pretest score was 66.8 and a mean post-test score was 86.3, for a mean gain in IQ of 19.5 points.

A follow-up study of 33 children enrolled in primary school, who had participated in the project the first year, showed the following results in reading readiness as tested by the Metropolitan Readiness Test: high normal, 15.15 percent; average, 39.40 percent; low normal, 36.36 percent; and low, 9 percent.

A second follow-up study of 37 children, who had participated in the project during its second year and enrolled in regular school for the 1971-72 school year, indicated these results from the Metropolitan Readiness Test: high normal, 0; average, 19 percent; low normal, 35 percent; and low, 46 percent.

The difference shown in the two studies is attributed to the fact that the most needy children were least accessible and more reluctant to participate during the project's first year. During the second year of the program, efforts were made to include all of the deprived who could be located. This was made possible by cooperation with the Office of Economic Opportunity, who transported a few of these children to the mobile unit, and by shifting some centers and opening others in other deprived areas.

Ordinarily, it could have been expected that more of the project children would have fallen in the low category on the follow-up studies.

Changes in parent attitudes and beliefs were tested in September and again in May on a locally developed questionnaire, "Inventory of Parent Beliefs and Practices." Growth was statistically significant. However, to the staff, a more significant evaluation was expressed by a parent, "I always knowed that somethin' good would come from being poor!"

OTHER ASSESSMENTS

Observations about the results of the program have come from various sources. For instance, an insurance agent inquires. "What are you doing in the School on Wheels? Until lately children in these houses always hid when I knocked. Now they greet me with conversation."

The Headstart teachers and director commented: "From the first day of school, we can tell the children who have been to the Classroom on Wheels." "We have been able to upgrade our program since we get students from the Classroom on Wheels." "We can always depend on the parents who have participated in your program."

The project staff observed that, in the areas of social skills and work habits, children have made dramatic behavior changes. Many changed from apathetic, nonverbal, shy, unresponsive children to responsive, enthusiastic, and happier children. They became less fearful and more secure and generally exhibited behavior characteristic of the normal four-year-old of less deprived families.

These teacher observations are not merely generalizations for they can be specifically related to individual students: Ricky, who cried at first, now enters eagerly and enthusiastically into the activities. Nicole, who lay in the floor and kicked, now smiles broadly as she rocks her baby. Rodney, who had to have persistent lap therapy, goes about with a business-as-usual attitude. Nora and Flora, the black twins who cried at first when left alone with a white teacher, now tug at her skirt obviously asking for some special loving from her. Carlos, who demonstrated extreme shyness by hiding behind his mother's skirt, now holds up his head proudly as if to say "Look at Me!"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Murfreesboro Preschool Devlopment Project has benefited from the support, encouragement, and many hours of work contributed by scores of people. The staff gratefully acknowledges the help given by the following people.

The State Department of Education, ESEA Title III staff, and the State Advisory Council for their confidence and support.

The Murfreesboro Board of Education for their confidence and concern evidenced by their expanding the program in its final year and continuing it after federal funding ceased.

Mr. B. E. Hobgood and staff of the Murfreesboro City Schools for their empathy and concern for the disadvantaged in our community and for their encouragement and support.

Dr. Rupert Klaus, school psychologist, for his encouragement, statistical computations, and overall direction of the evaluation.

The Office of Economic Opportunity for aiding in transporting children not accessible to a center and for providing a youth worker, Mrs. Frances Flemming.

The First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Mr. Thomas Warnick, pastor, for financing the program during the summer months in order that children may have extended opportunities over and beyond that provided in the regular budget.

Individual citizens, church, civic and professional groups in Murfreesboro who have aided financially in order that the dimensions of the program may be enlarged.

Middle Tennessee State University professors, Dr. Mary Tom Berry, Dr. Marion Hamilton, and Dr. Mary Martin, who have given inspiration and encouragement.

The Staff

Mrs. Eloise Taylor
Miss Margaret Willis
Mrs. Mary Jane Sailor
Mrs. Jean McNulty
Mrs. Shirley Waters
Mrs. Ida Fraser
Mrs. Elaine Riley
Mrs. Dana Long
Mrs. Annette Wade
Mrs. Rose Johnson
Mrs. Ruth Bowdoin

Appendix

20

Approximate Costs for Operation

Bus Renovation

Labor and materials for painting and paneling the interior, building storage cabinets and bookcases	$ 275
Labor for wiring, installing two heaters and air conditioner	375
Installation of indoor-outdoor carpet	100
Purchase of wooden housekeeping center to be built in (stove, refrigerator, sink)	100
Draperies (material and labor)	100
Sign painter for painting nursery characters	50
	$1,000

Major Equipment

Round table and 12 stackable chairs (drop leaf tables can be built in)	$ 110
Portable refrigerator	100
Filmstrip projector, window shade type screen and filmstrips	125
Record player and records	50
Tape recorder	50
Language kit	65
Flannel board, card holder, small counting frame	15
Chemical commode	100
Large picture books (for classroom only)	100
	$ 715

Teaching aids and supplies (serving one classroom and approximately 75 - 90 children and parents)

a. For children

Beads for stringing (large jumbo and small)	$ 15
Wooden puzzles of graded difficulty	40
Pegboards and pegs (for 12 children)	20
Art supplies: blunt scissors, large crayons, paper, paints, brushes	75
Creative blocks, colored cubical blocks, educational and child guidance toys	150
Toys: trucks, cars, dolls, tea sets, doll bed, clothes, puppets (replace during the year)	150
	$ 450

b. For parent involvement and parent education

Pocket folder kits for parents	$ 30
Mimeograph paper and stencils for making booklets and homework for children	200
Printing "Pledge to Read" cards	20
Inexpensive books (Little Golden variety)	300
Pictures and acetate covers	50
Booksatchel for each child (materials and labor .50 each)	40
Mailing program (envelopes for 1500 letters)	40
Stamps for newsletters and mailed homework[1]	120
	$ 800

[1]Mailing permits may be issued if 200 letters are mailed.

Operation of Plant

Gas, oil, upkeep of bus (parts, etc.)	$ 250
Cost of electric bill (meter attached to back of bus)	150
	$ 400

Personnel

Plan 1

1 Director (home-visitor, program and parent education coordinator must have teaching experience with young children.)

1 Teacher

1 Paraprofessional aide

½ Secretary - clerk

(One teacher and one aide for each extra classroom.)

Plan 2

2 Teachers

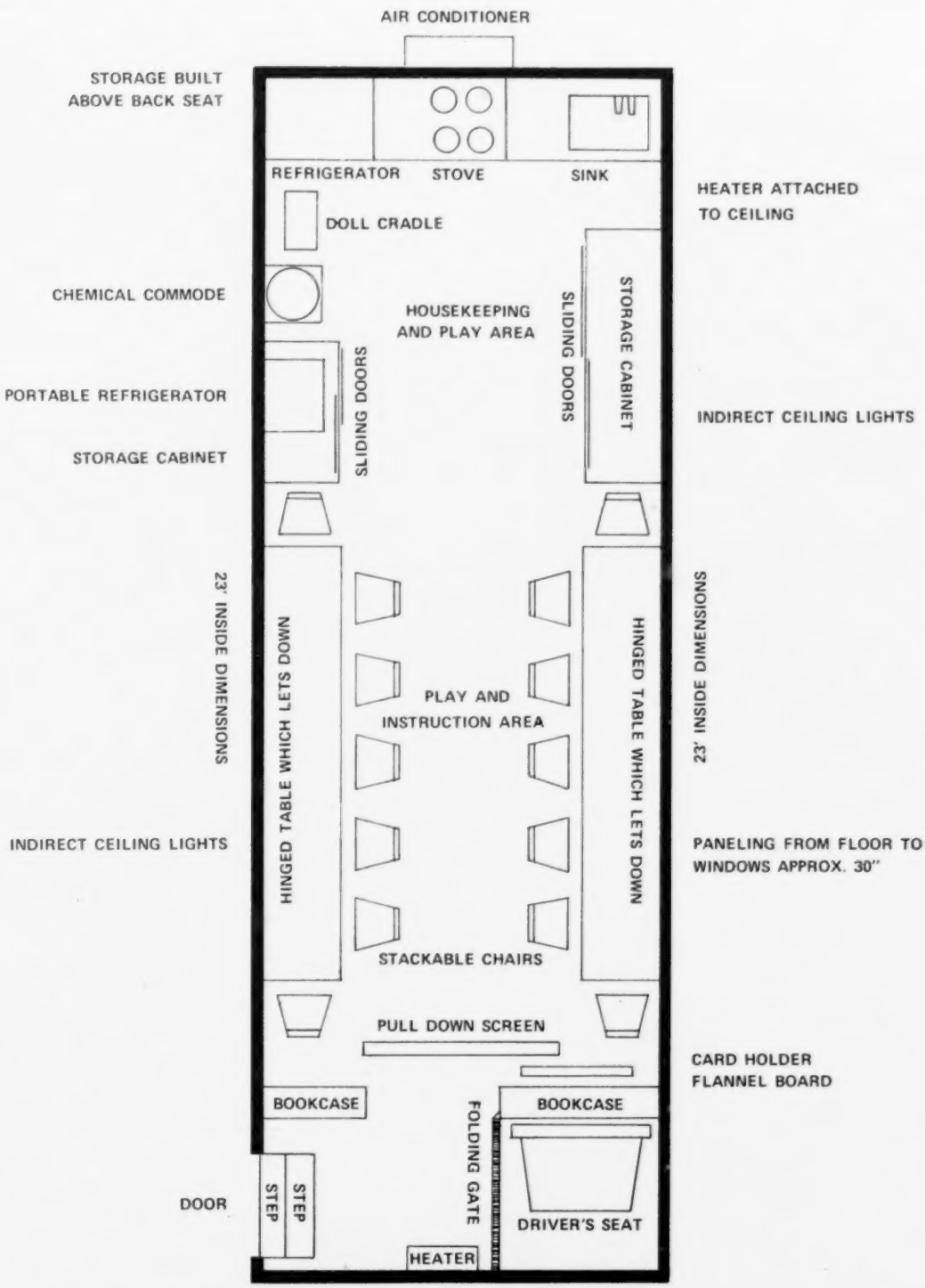
1 Secretary-clerk, Part-time director or assigned from existing school personnel (Cost will vary according to salary scale, experience, and qualifications.)

$20,000

Summary of total cost for implementation and operation first year

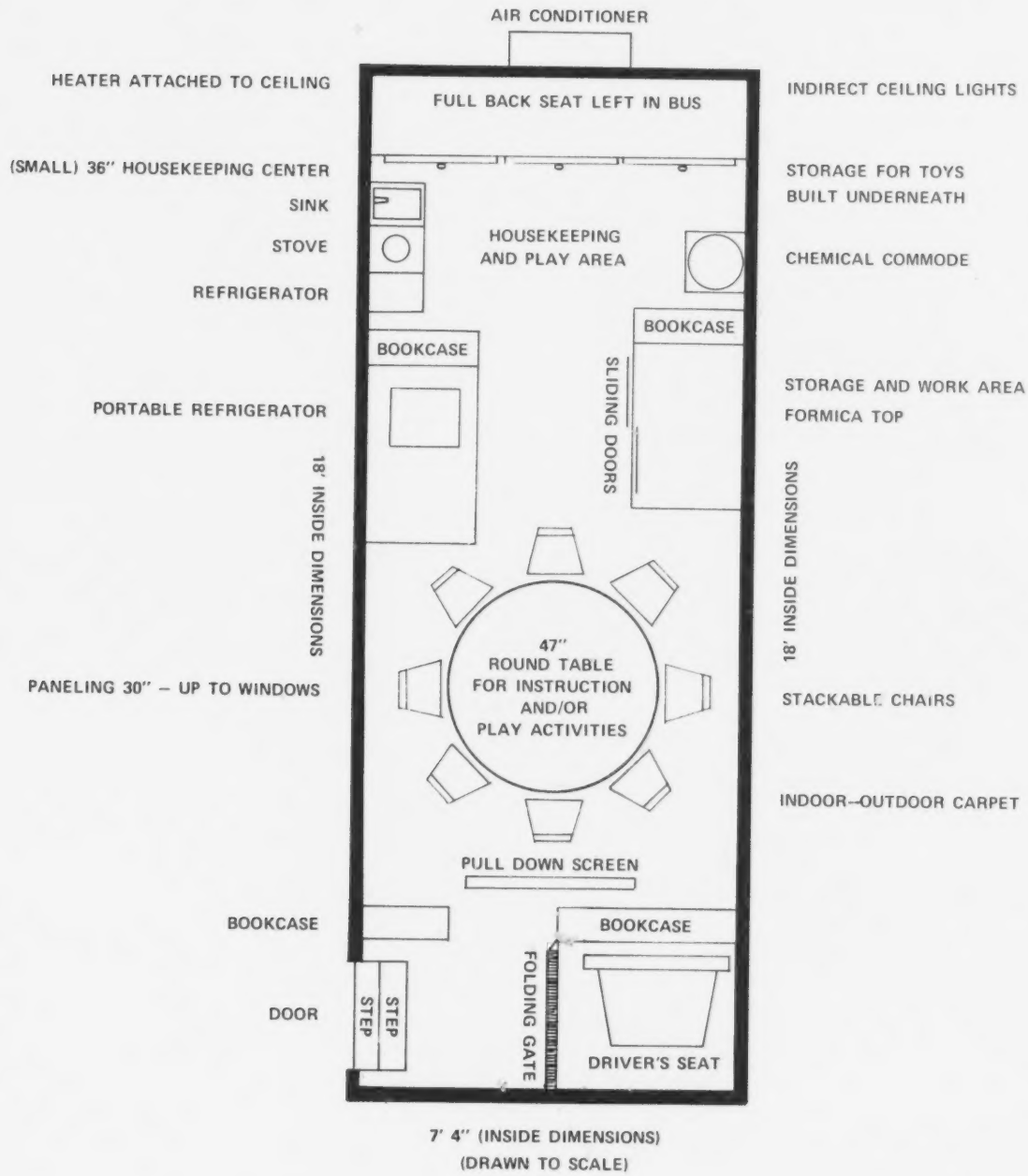
Used school bus	$ 2,500
Renovation	1,000
Equipment	715
Program for children and parents	1,250
Operation of plant	400
Personnel	20,000
Total costs	$25,865

FLOOR PLAN FOR LARGER BUS CLASSROOM



1/2' (INSIDE DIMENSIONS)
(DRAWN TO SCALE)

FLOOR PLAN FOR SMALLER BUS CLASSROOM



7' 4" (INSIDE DIMENSIONS)
(DRAWN TO SCALE)

RING
INGA-MAJIGS